

THE GREATEST NEED OF OUR SOCIETY AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Its first great need I discovered over two years ago, at a Yearly Meeting, and have been longing ever since to speak of it to whom it might concern, yet hardly knew how to approach them. I noticed that the heaviest tasks fell upon the aged, with few exceptions. There is great need of many younger shoulders to bear the heat and burden of the day. In this I refer not to the spiritual tasks merely, but the real manual labor, the physical toil necessary to maintain the meetings. In some neighborhoods, especia'ly, the most active Friends are those who have reared up families, and, one by one their children have gone out into the broad fields of activity to seek homes for themselves, until those who have so tenderly guarded their youthful footsteps are left almost alone. They are vigorous enough to provide for their own needs, but perhaps it is almost Yearly Meeting time, with a prospect of multitudes to be housed and fed for a week; and what is to be done? The children who would gladly help are far away: so the dear old mother goes to work to put the house in order, and bake and prepare for a host. She may be weak and weary, or have palpitation of the heart after violent exercise, but this makes no difference. The guest-chambers must be swept and garnished, all the beds and bedding must be lifted out into the sun and wind, or by a lively fire, else some one is liable to take cold, even in summer, for it is well known that unused beds always gather cold and dampness. Then they are put back in their places, and look invitingly fresh and downy. There is no end of the baking and other preparation that must be done, for two meals are to be served at home every day, and one great one between them at the meeting-house. This means that she must rise every meeting-day at four o'clock in the morning,

so as to perform all the household duties before meeting time. Her guests, if they venture into the kitchen to lend a helping hand, will be astonished to see the great pans of bake beans, rice puddings, meats, etc., all done before breakfast or soon after, ready to be carried to the meeting-house. A whole carcass of mutton is sometimes baked at one time, and other things in proportion. Would it be any wonder if the weary head so much in need of rest, should droop, and the eyelids close gently un'er the soothing influence of the meeting service? How often I have thought of this while contemplating the query: "Are Friends guilty of sleeping in meeting, or other unbecoming conduct, etc."

Of course, it would be unbecoming for all the people in the meeting to fall asleep, but if *one* finds it impossible to do otherwise, there is usua'ly a cause. Our Heavenly Father kindly gives what most they need; their spirits are already refreshed, for they have done well their duty, and physical refreshment is their greatest need; yet, to hear the beautiful testimonies given would be a strength giving feast to them, which they would much regret to miss. And so it is that my mind was concerned upon this subject, for I felt sure there must be families living near, young married people, perhaps, or middle aged, who could greatly assist by taking a part of this labor upon themselves, of entertaining guests, and who would gladly do it if they understood the need. The fact that they use not Friends' ways of dress and address need make no difference. Perhaps some do this already who are not members, but love to do them kindness. Friends' children at home all do their part with lively step and cheerful heart, but there is need of more such workers. Who will assist in time to come?

Another need of the Society is, confidence in the ability of its younger members to do any necessary work of the Society, to feel that when older